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Scandinavian Studies

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IBSEN IN AMERICA: 1936-1946

SVERRE ARESTAD

University of Washington

IT SEEMS desirable to bring up to date the Ibsen bibliography that was completed through 1935 by Annette Andersen and published in *SS*, Vol. XIV, No. 5, pp. 65-109 and No. 6, pp. 115-155, particularly since all Ibsen criticism published in the United States, exclusive of theatrical notices, is now being abstracted for the *American Scandinavian Bibliography*, begun in 1947, that appears annually in *SS*, under the editorship of Professor Walter Johnson. The purpose of the present bibliography is thus to bridge the gap between 1935 and 1947.

The present bibliography is divided into two sections: (1) comprises criticism of Ibsen's works; (2) includes criticism, exclusive of the newspaper notices, of performances of Ibsen's plays. Although a number of editions of individual plays and collections of plays have been issued and reissued during the decade under consideration, notably *Eleven Plays of Henrik Ibsen* (Modern Library), which fact is indicative that Ibsen still holds a rather large reading audience, no new translations of Ibsen plays have appeared which have challenged the position of the now diffident Archer translation. A mere listing of the publications of Ibsen's plays, largely in old dress, has therefore not been considered desirable in this bibliography. Reviews of works on Ibsen during the decade were sporadic and, on the whole, not penetrating, and so they too have been excluded here. A few items for the years 1934-1935 that were not included in the Annette Andersen bibliography have been incorporated. Some studies that fall within the decade, e.g., *Henrik Ibsen: A Study in Art and Personality*, by Theodore Jorgenson, and the chapter

on Ibsen and Wagner in Eric Bentley's *The Playwright as Thinker*, have not been included for the reason that reviews of these works are noted in one of the annual *American Scandinavian Bibliography* series.

By and large, the critics who give sustained study to the whole or a part of his production as dramatic literature find Ibsen increasing in stature as the perspective lengthens. It is an interesting commentary, however, that the theater critics often agree that Ibsen is outmoded material for the stage. Although a good deal of disagreement exists among the various theater critics with regard to particular performances, the abler critics occasionally encounter an Ibsen performance which they consider excellent. Quite as often, however, they disparage the lack of success with which Ibsen is presented to the public.

The abbreviations employed are:

AL	<i>American Literature</i>
ASR	<i>American Scandinavian Review</i>
JEGP	<i>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</i>
MLN	<i>Modern Language Notes</i>
NASR	<i>Norwegian-American Studies and Records</i>
PMLA	<i>Publications of the Modern Language Association</i>
PQ	<i>Philological Quarterly</i>
SAQ	<i>South Atlantic Quarterly</i>
SP	<i>Studies in Philology</i>
SRL	<i>Saturday Review of Literature</i>
SS	<i>Scandinavian Studies</i>
TAM	<i>Theatre Arts Monthly</i>

Criticism of Ibsen's Works

1934

Moses, M. J. and Brown, J. M. *The American Theatre as Seen by its Critics 1752-1934*. New York, Norton & Co. Pp. 151-153: "Ibsen the Individualist" (from James Gibson Huneker's *Iconoclasts: A Book of Dramatists*. Scribner's, 1905), and pp. 193-196: "A Note on Tragedy" (reprinted in *Drama and the Stage*. Harcourt, Brace, & Co., 1922, from *The Nation*, May 31, 1919).

The former work contains an interesting note on Ibsen's individuality, particularly on Ibsen's insistence on will and the will to will. The latter work sets

forth that Ibsen did produce tragedies and, among other matters, gives a concise, tenable statement of the central idea of *Ghosts*.

1935

Decker, C. R. "Ibsen's Literary Reputation and Victorian Taste." *SP*, Vol. XXXII, No. 4, pp. 632-645.

Discusses Ibsen's introduction to England, the Victorians' vindictive attitude toward him, and their final acceptance of him. Shows the parallel attitudes of enthusiasm for Ibsen and hostility against him. "Ibsen succeeded in making himself a force in Victorian society, and that in doing so he illuminated the Victorian temper in moral and aesthetic matters."

1936

Buck, Philo M. Jr. *The World's Great Age, The Story of a Century's Search for a Philosophy of Life*. New York, The Macmillan Company. Pp. 256-281: "The Master Builder: Ibsen."

A reconsideration of Ibsen's position, on the basis of society's advances, to test the subject-matter of his plays on a universal level with a view to determine how much of Ibsen has remained vital to us. Feels that the majority of the questions that Ibsen raised have been answered, and that his desire to educate and instruct is lost on our ears. Ibsen is largely of his age, not of ours. He gave Europe and America a new drama, and tragedy a new definition. However, only in a few instances, notably in *Rosmersholm*, did he give us universal, lasting tragedy. Mr. Buck's interpretation of a number of Ibsen's plays, particularly *Ghosts*, is extremely superficial.

Forster, E. M. *Abinger Harvest*. New York, Harcourt. Pp. 282-287: "Ibsen the Romantic." Reprinted from *New Republic*, 54: 186-188.

Presents in a closely reasoned, short statement that Ibsen's dramas, especially the earlier and the later, were the products of an inherently romantic mind and hence in essence poetic.

Zucker, A. E. "Ibsen—Hettner—Coriolanus—Brand." *MLN*, Vol. LI, No. 2, pp. 99-106.

A not convincing attempt to localize the influence of *Coriolanus* on *Brand*.

Andersen, Annette. "Ibsen in America." *SS*, Vol. XIV, No. 5, pp. 65-109, and No. 6, pp. 115-155.

A bibliography of about 800 items including criticism, theater reviews, and the publication of Ibsen's works in America from 1882 to 1936. An extremely use-

ful tool, but could have been vastly improved by fuller and more critical annotations and by the arrangement of entries into different categories.

1937

Flores, Angel, ed. *Henrik Ibsen, A Marxist Analysis*. New York, The Critics Group. Pp. 92. "Introductory Note," pp. 7-19, by Anatol Lunacharsky; "Letter to Paul Ernst," pp. 21-24, by Friedrich Engels; "Ibsen's Greatness and Limitations," pp. 25-34, by Franz Mehring; and "Ibsen, Petty Bourgeois Revolutionist," pp. 35-92, by George V. Plekhanov. Bibliography.

These four items, written between 1890 and 1908, but published in English for the first time in 1937, analyze Ibsen's production against the background of developing capitalism in Norway and show, from the Marxian point of view, what Ibsen's greatness and limitations were. Incorrect emphasis is given to some of Ibsen's works and to the economic and ideological development of Norway. There are also certain errors of fact. However, in spite of these aberrations, the respective authors succeed in stating Ibsen's limitations, according to their theory of what literature ought to do, i.e., point to a solution. Ibsen had, of course, no solution. Lunacharsky concludes: "Ibsen is an example of a tremendous effort on the part of certain more admirable members of the petty bourgeois to create an independent place for themselves in the face of advancing capitalism; and he is a splendid illustration of the utter impossibility that middle class writers—no matter how talented—will ever achieve this aim."

Haugan, Einar. "On Translating *Peer Gynt*." *SS*, Vol. XIV, No. 8, pp. 187-198.

An illuminating commentary on poetic translations, on the style of *Peer Gynt*, and on the pitfalls Ibsen's dramatic poem presents to the translator, based on an analysis of two unrhymed (Archer and Sharp) and two rhymed (Roberts and Holt) translations. A very able critical estimation of the shortcomings of these, particularly of Holt's rendition.

Paulson, Arthur C. *The Norwegian-American Reaction to Ibsen and Bjørnson, 1850-1900*. Northfield, Minn., The St. Olaf College Press. Pp. 29. (A summary of a thesis, typed, University of Iowa, 1933.)

Contains information on the reception that the works of Bjørnson and Ibsen received among the Norwegian immigrants in America, their introduction into the Norwegian-American colleges, and their growing popularity with the press and the people of the rural areas.

Bach, Giovanni. *The History of Scandinavian Literatures*. Com-

piled, translated in part, and edited by Frederika Blankner. New York, Dial Press. Pp. 32-42: "Henrik Ibsen."

Source of Ibsen's early thought is Kierkegaard, especially in *Brand*. Speaks of Ibsen as "the tragic Norwegian," and sketches briefly the ideas in Ibsen's plays. Adds nothing to the knowledge of Ibsen.

Haugen, Einar. "Studies in Norwegian Literature During 1936." *SS*, Vol. XV, No. 1, pp. 12-25.

The digests of Ibsen criticism that appeared in Norway during the year occur on pp. 17-19.

Lux, G. J. "His Excellency, Luigi Pirandello; Random Comparisons with Other Writers." *SAQ*, Vol. 37, pp. 69-70.

Contains a number of interesting points of similarity between Ibsen and Pirandello and a number of contrasts; also a few factual errors, such as "Ibsen wrote one play every two years, twelve in all."

Wenger, C. N. and Dahlström, C. E. W. L. "Aesthetics of the Modern Awakening in Scandinavia: Ibsen and Strindberg." *SS*, Vol. XV, No. 2, pp. 58-65.

Ibsen "became a master in the dramatic presentation of current social experience through an understanding use of organic situations, living situations exemplifying conflicts which were observed realities to him and his contemporaries." The essay is too general to be convincing, but it is suggestive.

1939

Block, Anita. *The Changing World in Plays and Theatre*. Boston, Little, Brown & Co. Pp. 22-33: "Ibsen."

In these eleven pages, plus a dozen scattered references to Ibsen throughout, Mrs. Block presents Ibsen as the dramatist who has extended our horizon by bringing up for discussion problems that were taboo and shows him to be positive, a friend of society, and one who made apparent the individual's responsibility toward a developing social order that was recognizing its obligations toward the individual.

Jacobs, Elizabeth. "Henrik Ibsen and the Doctrine of Self-Realization." *JEGP*, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 3, pp. 416-430.

Attempts to crystallize the essence of Ibsen's dramatic expression, "the doctrine of self-realization," in the light of his own life and in relation to his age. She finds that Ibsen achieved his goal and that he was one with his age in setting forth this postulate for living. Miss Jacobs relies largely upon existing criticism to indicate how well Ibsen succeeded. She makes good use of Koht, and yet she

calls for a study that will show the relation between Ibsen's philosophy, his life, and his plays—the very thing that Koht has so ably done.

Johannessen, Sigvald. "Ibsen's Theater a Museum." *ASR*, Vol. XXVII, No. 4, pp. 313–316.

Describes Ole Bull's Old Bergen Theater, where Ibsen got his early training. Four illustrations.

Zucker, A. E. "Courtiers in *Hamlet* and *The Wild Duck*." *MLN*, Vol. LIV, No. 3, pp. 196–198.

Suggests that Ibsen may have drawn on his knowledge of the production of *Hamlet* as described in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* in making up the company at dinner in the opening scene of *The Wild Duck*. This seems to be stretching coincidence too far.

1940

Dukes, Ashley. "Southward Norseman; Ibsen and Strindberg on the Stage of Europe in the Eighteen-nineties." *TAM*, Vol. 24, p. 550.

Mr. Dukes comments on the first Ibsen performance in England, on the Ibsen and Strindberg vogue in Germany in the early 20th century, on how Ibsen retained his position throughout Europe and on the interest in Ibsen and Strindberg on the Paris stage.

Gassner, John. *Masters of the Drama*. New York, Random House. Pp. 354–383: "Ibsen, The Viking of the Drama," and pp. 384–386: "Ibsen over Europe."

A most satisfying analysis of Ibsen's dramas as works of art. The weaknesses of some plays are considered and the greatness of others underscored. There emerges a conception of Ibsen which is much more plausible than that of the "pose" of anger, personal tragedy, and uncompromising social criticism that so often is attributed to him. Gassner thinks of Ibsen as a poet, an acute observer, a person who wants a better world but who knows how slow the social evolutionary process is; he thinks of Ibsen, moreover, as a compassionate friend of humanity, whose humor, though grim, is basically optimistic. In the final pages Mr. Gassner sketches Ibsen's influence on the modern drama.

Kaufmann, F. W. *German Dramatists of the 19th Century*. Los Angeles, Lymanhouse, 6530 West Olympic Boulevard. Pp. 178–214: "Henrik Ibsen."

A consideration of Ibsen's dramatic production with a view to elucidate Ibsen's moral philosophy and the changing emphasis that he placed upon (1) the

freedom of the individual and (2) the gradual realization that man must contribute through the community if he is to fulfill a mission. This is on the whole a profitable discussion. The analysis of *Ghosts* is particularly good, but Bishop Nikolas, in *The Pretenders*, is superficially treated and Earl Skule, in the same play, is largely misunderstood (Earl Skule does not represent undaunted lust for power); and *Rosmersholm* is thought of as a great play chiefly because of the character of Rebecca, who accepts challenges and faces responsibility—an erroneous approach. Is it necessary in an American publication to speak of Bishop Nikolaus, Pastor Strohmann, and Schwanhild?

Paulson, Arthur C. and Bjørk, Kenneth. "A Doll's House on the Prairie: The First Ibsen Controversy in America." *NASR*, Vol. XI, pp. 1-16.

A lively exchange of opinion between two Norwegian-Americans on the subject of the morality of *A Doll's House*, with some attention given to Ibsen's play.

Zucker, A. E. "Southern Critics of 1903 on Ibsen's *Ghosts*." *PQ*, Vol. XIX, No. 3, pp. 392-399.

Extremely engaging article based on the scrapbook of Mr. Claus Bogel, who played Oswald in *Ghosts* throughout the South in 1903-4. Prof. Zucker quotes from the newspaper critics to show the invariably favorable attitude of the Southern audiences towards *Ghosts* and suggests an interesting explanation of the South's "liberal" views as opposed to the reaction of London and the metropolitan cities of the East coast.

1941

Swanson, C. A. "Ibsen's *Ghosts* at the Théâtre-Libre." *SS*, Vol. XVI, No. 8, pp. 281-290.

Treats of the preparatory work and agitation, principally by Zola, that was needed before Antoine finally agreed to perform an Ibsen play on a Paris stage (*Ghosts*, May 29, 1890) and says something about the performance.

1942

Anon. "Ibsen." *Time*, Vol. 39, p. 88.

Suggests that "Ibsen indicted modern society," and so, like most of the great writers of the past hundred years, was a prophet of the doom of our civilization.

Middleton, Walter. *Ibsen and America, 1882-1906*. A thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Arts, University of Washington, 1942. Typewritten. Pp. 205. Bibliography.

Discusses in detail, with numerous quotations from critics of theater performances and from literary critics, the pattern of acceptance of Ibsen in America, on the stage, in the libraries, in the universities, and on the road. The author, drawing upon all the sources available to him in English, does a thorough job on the introduction of a foreign writer to another culture. The controversy among the critics over Ibsen, especially between Wm. Morton Payne and William Winters (Huneker, H. H. Boyesen, and others), is very ably presented. The particular value of the critics' views of Ibsen is that Mr. Middleton sees them in the perspective of Ibsen criticism during our own period. There are a few errors of fact, but these do not detract from the value of the study.

Swanson, C. A. "An Ibsen Theater in Paris: Lugné-Poë and the Théâtre de l'Œuvre." *SS*, Vol. 17, No. 4, pp. 133-139.

An interesting commentary on the great French actor Lugné-Poë and his production of Ibsen in Paris. Ibsen became identified, in France, with Lugné-Poë and in 1903 Ibsen made him his official agent.

Thompson, Alan Reynolds. *The Anatomy of Drama*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press. Pp. 313-330.

A good essay on Ibsen's contribution to the drama and, brief as it is, a sound analysis of Ibsen's basic views and how these were incorporated into the drama. Ibsen displays technical skill, but more important is the fact that his characters *will*, they struggle. "And they fight for their souls, whereas too often the characters of contemporary dramatists merely scramble to satisfy their biological urges." Ibsen can teach contemporary dramatists two important matters: "that the exercise of the will is the essence of great drama, and that men become human by loving unselfishly." Only part of what Professor Thompson says is new, but the old is timely and freshly put.

van Doren, Mark. Editor, *The Invitation to Learning*. New York, Random House. Pp. 74-88: "Henrik Ibsen: *The Wild Duck*."

A stimulating dialogue between Margaret Webster, John Mason Brown, and Mark van Doren, during which an excellent analysis of the central problem of *The Wild Duck* emerges as well as interesting opinions on a number of Ibsen's other plays and characters.

Zucker, A. E. "Goethe and Ibsen's Button Moulder." *PMLA*, Vol. LVII, No. 4, Pt. 1, pp. 1101-1107.

Speaks of the originality of Goethe's concept of immortality and how Ibsen seized upon it and in *Peer Gynt* made of it the character of The Button Moulder, who, in turn, according to Zucker, embodies Ibsen's own ideas regarding immortality.

1943

Haugen, Einar. "Ibsen in the Mill Race." *SS*, Vol. 17, No. 17, pp. 313-316.

This paper presents a rather sharp attack upon Professor Willey's (see below) concept of Ibsen's attention to detail, concentrating upon the "conditions" for suicide in *Rosmersholm*. In a measure Haugen swings the pendulum too far the other way by denying to Ibsen the meticulous attention to factual detail that was part of his practice.

Hattstaedt, Edwin William. *Ibsen's Ethical Nationalism*. (Summary of a dissertation accepted by the faculty of the Graduate School, Marquette University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.) Milwaukee, Wis., Marquette University Press. Pp. 52. Bibliography.

Hattstaedt has reduced a 500-page typewritten thesis to a mere fifty-page summary, with the result that many of his conclusions are not adequately demonstrated while others are completely unsubstantiated. The author finds that Ibsen's ethical nationalism, i.e., his consuming desire to elevate the moral and ethical qualities of his people, grew out of romanticism and found its fullest expression in Ibsen's first period. The ethical nationalism was definitely regressing by the time *Emperor and Galilean* was written (1873). The social plays of the middle period (among which Hattstaedt lists *Hedda Gabler*, because he doesn't know what else to do with it) the author holds to be merely destructive criticism on Ibsen's part, while the symbolic plays of the third period contain a measure of ethical nationalism as well as the concept of "universalistic service," given within the framework of an ethical individualism derived from Schleiermacher. The ethical individualism implies the meaninglessness of the concept of community which does not have its basis in the idea of a community of personalities.

There are quite a number of misinterpretations in this study. The author exaggerates, for example, the supposed influence of Hamsun on the later Ibsen, and he lumps together, on occasion, characters and plays which do not belong together. He retains, too, the old notion that Ibsen changed from absolutism to relativism in *The Wild Duck*; he misses Ibsen's real purpose in the social plays, and fails utterly to understand *Hedda Gabler*. But the summary ends on a strong note, for Hattstaedt has caught the significance of Rosmer, Solness, and Rubek. The real weakness of the study, however, derives from the fact that Hattstaedt assumes that Ibsen reasoned through the numerous opposing philosophies of his time and arrived at a synthesis, and that the actual impact upon Ibsen, outside of Brandes, came from Germany.

Wiley, Norman L. "Factual Inadvertencies in Ibsen's Dramas." *SS*, Vol. 17, No. 6, pp. 185-194.

An interesting examination (in some respects open to question) of several instances in which Ibsen did not observe fidelity to mere factual reality: in *Peer Gynt*, *Emperor and Galilean*, *The Wild Duck*, *Rosmersholm*, *Hedda Gabler*, *The Doll's House*, and *An Enemy of the People*.

Zucker, A. E. "The Forgery in Ibsen's *Doll's House*." *SS*, Vol. 17, No. 17, pp. 309-312.

Among other things, Professor Zucker found Professor Wiley's discussion of the forgery in *A Doll's House* open to question. Professor Wiley considered Helmer's and Krogstad's statements to Nora to be those of Ibsen, while Professor Zucker prefers to think that Ibsen simply let his characters say what the situation demanded. The latter view obviously is the correct one.

1944

Grunt, Olav Paus. "The Spirit of Norwegian Letters." *ASR*, Vol. XXXII, No. 1, pp. 10-15.

Shows how the literary tradition of Norway, including Ibsen, stood the Norwegians in good stead during the Nazi occupation.

Scanlan, Ross. *Studies in Speech and Drama*. (In honor of Alexander M. Drummond), Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press. Pp. 211-223: "The Challenge of Ibsen: A Study of Critical Contradictions."

Analyzes the dogma of criticism as it operated in Ibsen's day, showing how "blind faith in the sanctity of the law of artistic detachment caused most of the critical confusion and contradictions, and these qualities in that criticism clearly show the inherent weaknesses of the doctrine." Scanlan urges that if the critics had recognized that a great artist can, without impairing his art, combine moral and social views with characterization, then he is an artist and his work is great. "Today, then, these conclusions seem inevitable: first, that Ibsen was a great artist; second, that he was a deliberate polemist. It is certain that no questionable artist ever received the final verdict accorded to Ibsen. It is equally certain that no dramatist who really obeyed the law of complete detachment ever aroused such storms of social excitement." Scanlan's point is well and objectively made.

Skard, Sigmund. *The Voice of Norway*. (Halvdan Koht and Sigmund Skard). New York, Columbia University Press. Pp. 224-234: "The Ethical Imperative: Henrik Ibsen."

Treats Ibsen as a dramatist who had a burning message for his people which it was necessary for them to accept if they were to rise out of the quagmire of

lethargy and indifference into which they had sunk. Shows that Ibsen succeeded in firing the imagination of his contemporaries and made them think. Does not treat Ibsen as a literary artist.

Willey, Norman L. "Ibsen's Möllefoss." *SS*, Vol. 18, No. 2, pp. 79-82.

Quotes the law to show that Ibsen could have made a better case for Nora than Zucker will admit, but does not fully meet Zucker's argument (see above). Presents some good evidence against Haugen's (see above) objection to the original inclusion of an inadvertency on Ibsen's part in the "conditions" for suicide in *Rosmersholm*.

1945

Brooks, Cleanth and Heilman, Robert B. *Understanding Drama*. New York: Henry Holt & Co. Pp. 256-317 concern *Rosmersholm*.

The authors print the text of the play, with critical comment at the end of each act. An abundance of questions help to further the interpretation of the play. This is an extremely suggestive and useful teaching tool for *Rosmersholm*, although the thesis that the "meaning is clarified by the structure" does not seem to be pushed to its logical conclusion, and a clear-cut distinction between Rosmer's "past" and Rebecca's "past" is not made. This distinction needs to be made in order to bring out the full impact of the tragedy of the characters of Rosmer and Rebecca. It is of course extremely doubtful whether Ibsen wanted to show that Rebecca was ennobled by the Rosmer view, rather than that she was undermined by Kroll on account of her weakness.

Koht, Halvdan. "Shakespeare and Ibsen." *JEPG*, Vol. XLIV, No. 1, pp. 79-86.

Thinks Ibsen experienced Shakespeare for the first time on the Copenhagen and Dresden stages in 1852. Urges that Ibsen did not consciously draw upon the plays of Shakespeare when he wrote his own, but was inspired by Shakespeare. Koht gives a few examples of Shakespearean influence from *St. John's Night* through *The Pretenders*, but he leaves out many more, and he does not show how Ibsen actually developed under the influence of Shakespeare. Some of Koht's conclusions are open to question. He says, for example, that Ibsen "always created dramas, never 'histories,'" inferring that Shakespeare did the latter. Also: "Ibsen developed and deepened the psychology he found in Shakespeare's dramas. He never placed before us a complete self-confessed villain such as we can meet in Shakespeare. . . ." How about the Bishop in *The Pretenders*? Not a sufficiently specific presentation of influence to be impelling.

MacLeod, Vivienne Koch. "The Influence of Ibsen on Joyce." *PMLA*, Vol. LX, No. 3, pp. 879-898.

Well documented account of Joyce's first contact with Ibsen, how he learned

Norwegian to get at the originals of his master, and of the influence of Ibsen on Joyce—as a person and a writer, man and artist—principally up to the year 1914. There are allusions toward the end of the article that Joyce continued his interest in Ibsen.

Unamuno, Miguel. *Perplexities and Paradoxes*. New York, Philosophical Library. Pp. 51-57: "Ibsen and Kierkegaard."

An extremely well formulated statement of Ibsen as a disciple of Kierkegaard and as a follower of his philosophical principles. A tribute to Ibsen as a great poet whose characters, especially Brand, show a magnitude, in solitude, which ordinary men and women can neither emulate nor comprehend. Ibsen should be read and contemplated, not presented in the theater for the entertainment of the vulgar. "If one of Ibsen's dramas should please the audience in one of our theatres, I would begin to doubt its worth."

1946

Arestad, Sverre. "Ibsen and Shakespeare: A Study in Influence." *SS*, Vol. 19, No. 3, pp. 89-104.

Concludes that the real pressure of Shakespeare upon Ibsen was concentrated in *The Pretenders*, and argues that Ibsen's study of Shakespeare's plays during the period when he was preparing to write *The Pretenders* enabled Ibsen to get quality into it. The earlier influences on *Catiline* (*Julius Caesar*), *St. John's Night* (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) and *Lady Inger* (*Hamlet*) are really unimportant, and the later similarities between Shakespeare and Ibsen, in *Emperor and Galilean* and *Julius Caesar* and in *An Enemy of the People* and *Coriolanus*, do not prove influence.

Bucks, Dorothy S. and Nethercot, A. H. "Ibsen and Herne's *Margaret Fleming*: A Study of the Early Ibsen Movement in America." *AL*, Vol. 17, No. 4, pp. 311-333.

The authors conclude that Herne clearly owed some debt to Ibsen, and that the echoes from *A Doll's House* and *Ghosts* in *Margaret Fleming* are the result of inspiration, if, indeed, not an imitation, of Ibsen.

Henline, Theodore. *The Redemptive Feminine: An Esoteric Interpretation of Henrik Ibsen's Peer Gynt*. Box 6133, Metropolitan Station, Los Angeles, New Age Press. Pp. 24. Mimeographed.

Drawing upon others, notably A. L. Andrews, Mr. Henline submits that a comparison between *Faust* and *Peer Gynt* is valid, for both works treat the same theme and Ibsen's play becomes clear only in relation to Goethe's. Solveig is Peer's own higher nature, the immortal ego, the Mother God, the eternal femi-

nine. "Cosmically the Christ is the Redemptive Feminine." Man fell, but he will be redeemed by Solveig, "she of the Sun's-way." An able presentation of a thesis.

Osborn, Max. "Another Lost Manuscript: Incident Used by Ibsen in One of his Plays," tr. by B. F. Howlitz. *SRL*, Vol. 29, pp. 21-22.

Concerns pages 223-224 of Dr. Max Osborn's *Der Bunte Spiegel*, in which he cites Julius Hoffory's losing Eduard Sievers' manuscript on Germanic metrics and how this incident was used by Ibsen in *Hedda Gabler*.

Peacock, Ronald. *The Poet in the Theatre*. New York, Harcourt, Brace & Co. Pp. 77-85: "Effects of Ibsen."

Ibsen was received as the man of truth and idealism who strove upward, who personified integrity against hypocrisy, independence against cowardice, spiritual vitality against deadening convention. He was the supreme artist of the dramatic; his followers were impelled by his social message, but they neglected "the conditions of art, and so produced a body of work that may have been influential and successful at a certain level, but lacked poetic distinction." A valuable analysis.

Swanson, Carl A. "Ibsen and the Comédie-Française." *SS*, Vol. 19, No. 2, pp. 70-78.

Traces the long struggle of the progressive theater critics and actors to get Ibsen performed at the Comédie-Française, which would have been the crowning achievement for the dramatist in France, only to find that the theater's two attempts at Ibsen, *An Enemy of the People* (June 20, 1921) and *Hedda Gabler* (March 5, 1925), ended in dismal failure, and that the Comédie-Française did not even take notice of the centenary of Ibsen's birth (1928).

Weingarten, Joseph A. *A Tentative Bibliography of Scandinavian Drama*. 330 Cherry Street, New York City. Pp. 45. Mimeographed.

The Ibsen bibliography, incomplete, appears on pages 30-39.

Reviews of Ibsen's Plays

1936

Anon. *Catiline*. *TAM*, 20: 170.

Comment on Stein Bugge's staging of *Catiline* at Croydon Repertory Theatre, London. Drunk Roman and German-Helmeted conspirators—

Anon. *Ghosts*. *Catholic World*. 142: 601.

Review of performance of the play. No apparent comprehension of the tragedy of the play evident.

Anon. *Ghosts*. *TAM*, 20: 97-98 (illus. p. 117).

Nazimova's *Ghosts* well-nigh perfect. Although *Ghosts* is old-fashioned, Nazimova separates "the temporary argument from the eternal, to take from the situation all of its elemental values and give us not so much Ibsen's Mrs. Alving as the woman of any age who finds her motherhood betrayed, and who comes before us at the moment when nature interferes to settle the account."

Anon. *Hedda Gabler*. *News Week* (illus.), 8: 19.

Interesting comments by Alla Nazimova on Hedda and on Ibsen's women characters in general.

Anon. *Rosmerholm*. *TAM*, 20: 98 (illus. p. 100).

Le Gallienne's *Rosmersholm* a failure compared to Nazimova's *Ghosts*. *Rosmersholm* is timeless; *Ghosts* a special problem.

Krutch, Joseph Wood. *Hedda Gabler*. *The Nation*, 143: 641-642.

Review of Alla Nazimova's performance of Hedda. Thinks *Hedda Gabler* has "lasted" better than any other Ibsen play. Some interesting and provocative remarks on Ibsen's ability to understand the psychology of the individual.

Skavlan, Einar. "Plays Classical and Modern in Norway." *ASR*, Vol. XXIV, No. 2, pp. 151-156.

Contains a short notice of Alfred Maurstad's masterly portrayal of *Peer Gynt* at the National Theater in Oslo.

Vernon, Grenville. *Hedda Gabler*. *Commonweal*, 24: 134.

Compares Mme. Nazimova's new Hedda with the one of thirty years ago. Actress is excellent and *Hedda Gabler* is still good theater.

Young, Stark. *Ghosts*. *New Republic*, 85: 230.

Review of Empire Theatre performance of *Ghosts* on Dec. 22, 1935. The reader can judge from the following quotation what rewards Mr. Young reaped from the evening: "We all know that the theme of 'Ghosts' is the sins of the father visited on the children, though a more immediate social theme emerges as to how far the wife should maintain the marriage contract when her husband is debauched and diseased."

1937

Anon. *Hedda Gabler*. *Catholic World*, 144: 469.

This critic found that Hedda was "greedy for life" but a "miser in spirit." Feels that Nazimova emphasized Hedda's jealousy for Lövborg as the basis of the tragedy.

Anon. *Hedda Gabler*. *TAM*, 21: 11.

Praise of Hedda as a challenge to an actress and praise of Nazimova for having accepted and fulfilled the challenge. "Yet even if you never get, in *Hedda Gabler*, that unified satisfaction that came from the production last year of *Ghosts*, Nazimova's Hedda is something not to miss if you enjoy watching a fine actress in a great part."

Skavlan, Einar. "The Season in Norwegian Theaters." *ASR*, Vol. XXV, No. 3, pp. 247-252.

Notice of a performance of *A Doll's House* at the National Theater in Oslo.

Young, Stark. *An Enemy of the People*, tr. by W. Archer. *New Republic*, 90: 139-140.

Review of performance at Hudson Theatre, Feb. 15, 1937. Young feels that *An Enemy* is hardly a complete work of art and that it takes both Archer and Walter Hampden to save it.

Anon. *A Doll's House*. *Catholic World*, 146: 596-597.

Likes Miss Gordon as Nora and thinks that the play is one of the most perfect of Ibsen's plays.

Anon. *A Doll's House*. *Lit. Digest*, 125: 22-23 (ill.).

After praising Miss Gordon's performance of Nora (panned by others, especially Nathan), review concludes: "In other words, Ibsen was no Shakespeare or Aeschylus. He never dealt with the abstract human qualities, as universal today as they were yesterday."

Anon. *A Doll's House*. *Time*, 31: 32.

The following quotation from a review of Ruth Gordon's performance of Nora is characteristic of a tendency among some American theater critics of the 1930's, who maintain that Ibsen's conception of the characters is of course outmoded, but that the actresses overcome this by the simple expedient of creating in "their own image" unforgettable characters. "She plays Nora in *A Doll's House* as a child-like, skipping chucklehead, a unique individual rather than the social type Ibsen meant her to symbolize, thus helps transform the play from an outmoded indictment into a moving character study."

Barret, Karen. "Oslo-Copenhagen Letter." *TAM*, 22: 384.

Informative comment on 1938 season in Oslo and Copenhagen, with a good observation on Norwegian performance (Tore Segelcke) of Nora in *A Doll's House*.

Brown, John Mason. *Two on the Aisle; Ten Years of the American Theatre in Performance*. New York, W. W. Norton & Co. Pp.

76-79: "*A Doll's House*," by Jed Harris, and pp. 79-90: "Miss Le Gallienne's Hedda."

A Doll's House has lost point. Wilder improved on Archer, but not everywhere. Ruth Gordon disappointing. Praises *Hedda Gabler* as a triumph of construction and speaks of impelling human values, but Le Gallienne is a failure—her Hedda is not subtle, merely despicable.

Krutch, Joseph Wood. "*A Doll's House*." *Nation*, 146: 53-54.

Review of Miss Gordon's Nora. Cannot agree that door-slamming is important; thinks perhaps Weygand is right; Helmer is a pompous individual. Perhaps the play is a tragedy, perhaps a comedy.

Nathan, George Jean. "A Kewpie's House." *Newsweek*, 11: 28.

Severe indictment of Ruth Gordon's performance of Nora.

Nathan, George Jean. "*A Doll's House*." *Scribner's Magazine*, 103: 71.

Lambasts the play, Wilder's modernization of it, and Ruth Gordon's Nora.

Young, Stark. "A New Doll's House." *New Republic*, 93: 338-339.

Review of Morosco Theatre performance of Dec. 27, 1937. Comments on Wilder's adaptation of Archer's diffident translation, and feels that Miss Gordon makes a subtle Nora.

1939

Skavlan, Einar. "The Norwegian Stage: New Forces." *ASR*, Vol. XXVII, No. 3, pp. 240-245.

New playwrights being performed in Oslo, but Henrik Ibsen still a powerful force in the theater.

1942

Burnham, David. *Hedda Gabler* (translation by E. Borden and M. C. Canfield). *Commonweal*, 35: 417.

Katina Paxinou ineffectual as Hedda.

Young, Stark. *Hedda Gabler* (same translators as above). *New Republic*, 106: 204.

Review of Paxinou's Hedda. Performance not good; translation of play better than Archer's.

Anon. *Hedda Gabler* (same translators as above). *TAM*, 26: 226.

Non-assimilability of Mme. Paxinou (Continental style of Greek Royal Theater) produced lack of harmony in her performance of Hedda.

1943

Dukes, Ashley. *Hedda Gabler*. *TAM*, 27: 50-51.

Interesting comment on the difficulty of staging *Hedda Gabler* in London. Feels that this "masterpiece of the theatre trembles perilously on the verge of being 'potted Ibsen,' a parody of some Victorian humorist, an affair of baggy trousers and wet umbrellas and inspissated gloom." However, the play attracts even non-theater goers, perhaps because the mood of frustration strikes a chord among moderns—but there is something inherent in the play.

1945

Anon. *Peer Gynt*. *TAM*, 29: 147 (illus.).

British stage version of *Peer Gynt* has held its own with *Richard III* and *Arms and the Man*.

1946

Anon. *John Gabriel Borkman*. *Time*, 48: 55.

Anon. *John Gabriel Borkman*. *SRL*, 29: 30.

Gibbs, Wolcott. *John Gabriel Borkman*. *New Yorker*, 22: 57.

Amusing commentary on a performance of this play, during which the critic, drawing upon a flippant remark from H. L. Mencken, concludes that it is absurd for anyone in our day to be interested in this drama.

Krutch, Joseph Wood. *John Gabriel Borkman*. *Nation*, 163: 629.

In his review Krutch feels that Ibsen has not lost his grip. Lack of love is the point of departure. Krutch cites S. N. Behrman, in *The Talley Method*, as unknowingly rewriting *John Gabriel Borkman* to the extent at least that both plays are about able men who are "proto-facists" and who can justify their own ruthlessness because they are incapable of love.

Nathan, George Jean. *John Gabriel Borkman*, in *The Theatre Book of the Year 1946-1947*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf (1947), pp. 170-174.

Speaks of the oversentimentalized production of an already sentimental play, the error of making Ella Rentheim instead of Borkman the central figure,

and concludes that: "On the whole, a misguided interpretation, and one that aroused increased doubts as to the repertory competences of the company." This was the Eva Le Gallienne production of November 12, 1946.

Phelan, Kappo. *John Gabriel Borkman*. *Commonweal*, 45: 167-8.

Sympathetic review in which the reviewer sees two themes: "the folly of the denial of love, and an insistence upon freedom for the individual."

Young, Stark. *John Gabriel Borkman* (tr. by Eva Le Gallienne). *New Republic*, 115: 726.

Short notice indicating how technically perfect the play is and that the actors get only about fifty percent of what is in the lines.

1947

Sloane, Mary Jean. *The Plays of Henrik Ibsen on the American Professional Stage from 1917 to 1947*. A thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Arts, University of Washington. Type-written. Pp. 1-145.

A record of the production of Ibsen on the New York stage during the thirty-year period indicated in the title. Cast lists of plays are included, and reviews of each production, two or three from magazines and one from a newspaper (usually *The New York Times*), are reproduced. Only the pertinent critical portion of each review has been included. The plays are considered in alphabetical order. A summary of productions is given in the Appendix, pp. 138-139. The limitations that this project sets for itself must of course be accepted, but in spite of them the reader finds here conveniently assembled for him a large body of criticism of Ibsen productions, which, if not complete for the period, is certainly representative. There is no attempt at a critical synthesis of the material, and the editing is restricted to cutting reviews.

For the reader's convenience the theater notices by Brooks Atkinson on performances of Ibsen, which appeared in *The New York Times* during the decade under consideration, are given below. With the exception of the performance of *The Wild Duck*, which he considered abominable, Atkinson thought all the performances good, and he even called the *John Gabriel Borkman* performance "inspired." The references to *The New York Times* are: *A Doll's House*, December 28, 1937, p. 28; *An Enemy of the People*, February 16, 1937, p. 19; *Hedda Gabler*, November 17, 1936, p. 34 and January 30, 1942, p. 22; *John Gabriel Borkman*, November 13, 1946, p. 33; and *The Wild Duck*, April 16, 1938, p. 16.

HJALMAR GULLBERG: AN ANCIENT AND A MODERN

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I

FOR a man whose poetic rejection of life is so insistent, Hjalmar Gullberg has been singularly successful. He has since 1927 published nine volumes of poetry, risen to the post of theater director for the Swedish radio, and been elected to fill that chair of the Swedish Academy left vacant at Selma Lagerlöf's death in 1940. His influence has since been felt in the awarding of Nobel Prizes, particularly in the case of Gabriela Mistral, whom Gullberg translated and so introduced to the Academy.

Lennart Göthberg, the author of a full-length study of Gullberg (Bonniers, 1943), sees in him the "greatest name in modern Swedish poetry," and would place him in the tradition of Fröding, Heidenstam, and Karlfeldt. On the other hand, the Vitalists, headed by Artur Lundkvist, reject him as slick, academic, and commercial. Certainly, while Gullberg is an extraordinarily popular poet, his position in Swedish letters is still controversial.

Hjalmar Gullberg was born on May 30, 1898, and graduated from high school in 1917 when, as he says, "the half-starved youth of the crisis years learned to follow war in all its detail." At Lund Gullberg studied classics and literary history, taking his master's (*magister*) in 1923 and his licentiate in 1927. He associated himself with a literary circle which included Frans G. Bengtsson and Olle Holmberg, edited *Lundagård*, but steadfastly maintained a reputation for being "quietest among the quiet," as the Lund printer put it. The continental air of Lund at that time no doubt had its effect on Gullberg. Lund was the least national of Swedish universities and Gullberg's poetry exhibits little of national color or theme. It was an atmosphere free of "inbred dogmatisms," to use Gullberg's phrase. But Gullberg was at that time writing no poetry; indeed, he later

maintained that he wrote not a single line until he reached the age of decision, and that it was seven years after his first poem that he published his first volume of poetry. Surely this is, among poets, commendable restraint.

II

Gullberg effectively states his isolation as artist in the title of his first volume. *In a Strange City* (1927) asserts the poet's exile and melancholy in many ways, most clearly perhaps in "The Man With the Day Off":

I see streetcars and automobiles, all are about their business but I.
Mechanically I move on, all disappears in the rain,
Contours and colors dissolve, all to unreality.

But the poet mystically senses existence elsewhere, in "Capriccio":

It would be amusing to know,
just where I may have meaning for the moment.
Possibly I play a larger role
away from here, not here at home
where nothing much is going on tonight.
On second thought
I find this a knotty question.
A responsibility greater
than I ever suspected
makes me uneasy, and I would, that is, if I could,
gather in from all corners and all quarters
the loose ends, the ravellings I have thrown out into the world,
knot them neatly as they were before
and wind the whole
into a little round ball
that I might idly hold in my cupped hand.

The quiet, resigned irony is typical of Gullberg. The craving for order, for pattern in a meaningless world, is strangely not realized in the form of the poem. It ought to be noted that Gullberg usually employs tight verse forms and with great skill; the sprawl of free verse is alien to the essential neatness of his personality. He cultivates a poetic garden that is almost always trimly bordered by rhyme.

But the pessimism of this poem is typical, though far gentler than that of Gullberg's later poetry. While his pessimism here

is a kind of autumn nostalgia, it deepens into a bitter rejection of the modern world, a Spenglerian warning as is "Funeral Music" from the ironically titled *To Conquer the World* (1937):

All birth and all upbringing
In reality and song
Are an excursion into extinction
Abendlandes Untergang.
White flakes fall
On shattered lance and rubbed wall,
Earth sleeps shrouded in snow-white linen,
Rocked to rest by the evening sea;
Mankind moves toward its dissolution,
Night falls starless, and without memory.

Gullberg's contempt for man culminates in the embracing symbol of the sewer main; all roads of life, says Gullberg, lead to this subterranean Rome. What Gullberg hears is not "the still, sad voice of humanity," but the "sewer main's eternal organ tone."

This is no doubt the pessimism of the times, but to a large degree it derives from Gullberg's sense of personal failure. There is perhaps some truth in Alf Henriques' observation that Gullberg is one of those who ascend to poetry on the stepping stones of the women they could not have. While Gullberg's lyricism is never confessional in the most self-indulgent Shelleyan fashion, it is compensatory to the extent that it darkly shadows sexual failures. And failure spawns contempt for "love in the twentieth century" to the extent that Gullberg so names his fourth volume of poetry, which appeared in 1933. In "Love Story," perhaps the finest of his lyrics, Gullberg demonstrates a wonderfully sensuous manner:

If, as is true, your beauty fairly blinds me,
I grope about the sheet to make amends;
Your ear's sweet labyrinth, your breast's rotunda
Are goals for my pilgrim hands.

But physical love is really alien to Gullberg's poetry, and gives way to melancholia and unconcealed bitterness. "Romance has been black-listed," the poet declares, wondering what has happened to the virtues of a Victorian yesteryear:

We know that love conducted in the month of August
 Bears fruit in clinic by the month of May,
 For languishing has given way to lust,
 Prudery to open, erotic play.

To marry! How could we be so stupid!
 We'll maintain our freedom, keep our soul.
 You stay with your husband. I've my room.
 Our only law is: birth control.

Such is the love of the twentieth century, says Gullberg. In this respect his brave new world is Huxley's, with its lovers "quietly sweating palm to palm"; and his waste land that of Eliot, whose lovely lady, the folly of bed now over, "smooths her hair with automatic hand, and puts a record on the gramophone." It is a nostalgia for the romantic love of the past that forms a strong emotional core to Gullberg's poetry and nourishes a natural pessimism.

III

In a meaningless world, Gullberg sometimes dons the symbolic mask, partly for its protective covering, partly for the aesthetic distance it affords the poet as artist. In one of his earliest poems he conceives of himself as a clothing-store dummy, seeing life through his window, demonstrating the clothes in which men walk off with the women he admires. Bitterly he concludes:

The sun dwindles in the distance, its rags of fog stripped off,
 But I remain in my window, and laugh my stereotyped laugh.

Not entirely unlike the sardonic playing of the Pagliacci role is Gullberg's use of the academic mask in *Cultivated Bachelor* (1935). In this his fifth volume, a "tragic-comic cycle," the poet masquerades his timidity, impracticality, and idealism in the person of Schoolmaster Ortstedt, a figure both appealing and ludicrous. In the best poem of the cycle, the schoolmaster falls asleep over *The Critique of Pure Reason*, only to dream that "the thing in itself" comes to him by mail, carefully wrapped and addressed in the "crabbed, somewhat rococco hand" of Dr. Kant:

The box was opened in the window niche
 The winter light shone on: DAS DING AN SICH.

The thing, saw Orstedt, brooked no interference,
All outer world was just so much appearance.

And who is it thus dares undo the strings,
Release this pure reality, this thing of things?

Schoolmaster Orstedt jumped back distraught
From that which no one saw nor heard nor thought.

What if, in his rough hands, the thing should crack?
—With many thanks he quickly sent it back.

Here the poet is projected, in wry fashion, into the role of academic clown. The overtones of Lund atmosphere and Scanian humor are pronounced. But, most significantly, Orstedt's final gesture symbolizes Gullberg's own gingerly, but swift rejection of not merely the world of appearance, but also the philosopher's definition of reality. For the true definition Gullberg goes to religion.

IV

Gullberg is an important, if elusive, poet of Christianity. His preoccupation with mysticism is clear in "The Lake," from *To Conquer the World*, in which he presents the figure of that eleventh-century glory of the Cistercian order and leader of Christendom, Bernard of Clairvaux, as he rides around the lake with his squire, who is the speaker of the poem:

I thought as thrice in circuit we did fare:
My master knows the value of fresh air.

Our long-kept silence then my voice broke through:
"Indeed, I think the lake is marvellous too!"

A sudden whip-lash powerless had been to make
Me more amazed than his next words: "What lake?"

Outside my master's ken had been that day
The glassy lake, the lark's sweet roundelay.

The selfsame route we took; but in what wise
He rode upon that day was past surmise.

A squire should well enough his master know,
But who can fathom Bernard of Clairvaux?

The simplicity of Gullberg's ballad technique belies the depth of his inquiry into the Christian mind.

While Gullberg goes to Loyola for the title of his third volume of poetry, *Spiritual Exercises* (1932), there is little of consolation or personal devotion here or in any of Gullberg's poetry. His deity is, as Sven Stolpe has noted, "the stern, silent God of history, whose design no human being can perceive," the God of "Sacrificial Hymn," in *Love in the Twentieth Century*:

Armies were shattered like clay pigeons,
With young blood the hard earth ran,
Experiment shall God the Father
Until he has created man.

Christ is for Gullberg the dominant figure of history, and Golgotha the central scene. As Pound does in "The Ballad of the Goodly Fere," so Gullberg can give the person of Christ a very real immediacy, one actually more relevant than Pound's. The Christ of "Incognito," in the collection *Sonata* (1929), is on any thoroughfare, past or present:

He caught my eye in the seething roadway throng;
I recognized at once he was my friend.
"I understand"; he whispered, "but pretend
That nothing happened. I may not tarry long."

I wished to thank him for that solace there,
But hid my gratitude within my breast.
He went away. Yet who he was I guessed.
The ground was furrowed from the cross he bore.

But Gullberg can establish no personal relationship with his deity, and what prevents anything beyond a kind of pantheistic reaching for the fatherhood of God is Gullberg's contempt for man. He can never fully come to terms with God, the creator of man; he can, at best, in his capacity of poet, draw up a kind of wry contract with God in which he shall write according to the Creator's will; but God "shall in no way be obligated." It is hardly a happy contract, but it must do. Gullberg once—some eight years ago—declared to a reporter for *Politiken*, that he was "caught between mysticism and Christian individualism."

Perhaps when this conflict is resolved, a more positive Christianity will assert itself in Gullberg's poetry.

V

Irresolution of belief does not, as might be expected, create any deep obscurity in Gullberg's poetry; in fact, he is as intent on communication in poetry as he is in his professional capacity as radio man. His poetry is not merely simple; it displays, from time to time, the forthrightness of a radio jingle. In "The Reflective Postman," for example, ballad stanzas present the human portrait of a rustic figure not unaware of his classical ancestry:

A simple country postman I
Tramping ice and snow;
And just this daily wayfaring
Is the best life I know.

The world may go from bad to worse,
My job is free from shame;
Among my predecessors
Mercury I could claim.

Yet mine's an humble calling;
Upon these feet no wings,
Though messages from soul to soul
My mediation brings.

Here Gullberg is, at least in translation, simple to the point of banality. To avoid this risk he frequently assumes the modern idiom, somewhat after the manner of W. H. Auden. He recognizes in "Ars Poetica," from *Sonata*, that:

An old revival hymn that everybody knows
or the words of some songhit that everybody knows
do much to teach you
when it comes to being understood in verse.

Suppose you take as pattern for your poetry
a well-worded newspaper item,
people who didn't notice your intention
might be made to listen awhile
to what you had to say
about eternity and the inner world.

This is really the extent of Gullberg's modernity. He adopts the current idiom, the vernacular and frameworks of the vernacular, to provide ironic contrast for what are essentially traditional, usually romantic, ideas. By applying verbal clichés of the present to ideological clichés of the past, he creates a new thing. It is astonishing that from such ordinary materials Gullberg can write a poetry of freshness and vigor.

I have said nothing of Gullberg as classicist and translator of Aristophanes, Sophocles, and Euripides; and to do so now provides a clue to Gullberg's counterpart in England. His closest affinity is to A. E. Housman; the two, in fact, have a great deal in common: the pessimism, the irony, the utterly simple verse technique, the absolutely precise delineation. Then, too, there is the pseudo-modernity. The Christ of Gullberg, who hangs his crown of thorns on a cloak-room nail, has something in common with the carpenter's son of Housman, who can make the folksy admission, "Had I stuck to plane and adze, I had not been lost, my lads." It is curious that both men were educated in the classics and maintained more than an occasional and cloistered interest in the past.

Actually, Gullberg and Housman are of common and more recent heritage. Their poetic practice stems from the perilous balance of sentiment and satire, of the romantic and the classical, that characterizes the poetry of Heinrich Heine. Housman's lineal descent from Heine has often been noted; Gullberg, though the influence of his Goethe translations on his own poetry has been observed, has an even greater affinity to Heine. Certainly we may say of Gullberg, as Gerard de Nerval wrote of Heine: "He is both hard and soft, cruel and tender, naïf and sophisticated, skeptical and credulous, lyrical and prosaic, impassioned and reserved—an ancient and a modern."

(I am indebted to G. K. Laycock for the translations of "The Lake" and "The Reflective Postman"; the rest are my own.)

THE CONTEMPTUOUS SENSE OF THE OLD NORSE ADJECTIVE HVÍTR 'WHITE, FAIR'

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THE adjective *hvítr* 'white, fair' was regularly applied to either sex, as denoting a fair (blond) complexion (cf. *hvítr á hár, á hgrund*). When applied to men, however, *hvítr* often acquired a derogatory implication of 'effeminate, cowardly'.¹ In the *Flateyjarbók* (II,156) it is recorded that a certain Helgi was called *Helgi hvítr* but that this epithet (*hvítr*) was not a nickname, for he was actually fair-haired.² Heimdall, the god of light, properly acquired this epithet as "the fairest of the gods" (*hvítastr ása, þrym*. 15,1), but if in *Lokas.* 20,4 Loki refers to Heimdall as *sveinn inn hvíti* who seduced Gefion by bestowing upon her an ornamental gift,³ we may infer that in this connection the epithet *inn hvíti* implies a contemptuous implication of effeminacy. This assumption is supported by the fact that the skald *Björn Arneirsson hitdælakappi* in his *lausavísur* (*Sk.* B1,277, strophe, 3,1;279, strophe, 9,1) uses the same words as applied to *Þórðr*, his rival in love.

I am not aware that any explanation has ever been given as to how the adjective *hvítr* 'white, fair' acquired this contemptuous connotation of 'effeminate, cowardly.' I believe, however, that it can be satisfactorily explained as due to the fact that both the Christian God and Christ were called *Hvítakristr* 'The White Christ' by the heathen Icelanders at the time when the heathen and the Christian religions were in conflict with each other. A direct reference to this fact is made in the *Flatey-*

¹ For examples see Fritzner, *Ordbog over det gamle norske Sprog*², II, 144, s.v.

² "Helgi átti kenningarnafn, ok var kallaðr hvítr, var hónom þat eigi auknefni, því at hann var vænn maðr och vel hærðr, hvítr á hár."

³ *Lokasenna* 20

"þegi þú, Gefion! þess mun ek nú geta,
er þik glappi at geði:
sveinn inn hvíti, er þér sigli gaf,
ok þú lagðir lær yfir!"

jarbók (I,292¹⁷): "þeir sem þann sið [the Christian religion] hafa, taka nafn af þeim guði, er þeir trú á, er heitir Hvítakristr." That the Christian god was called 'The White Christ' was undoubtedly due to the fact that the newly baptized converts were obliged to wear white robes (*í hvítaváðum*) during the first week after the ceremony.

The OÍcel. heathen religion glorified physical strength and courage in combat, a direct antithesis to the Christian ideal of pacifism based upon the Golden Rule. Hence, the heathen Icelanders interpreted the Christian *Hvítakristr* 'The White Christ' as a cowardly, contemptible counterpart of Thor, the god of courage and strength, as is attested in the *Kristni saga* (IX,13).⁴ Thus, the adjective *hvítr* 'white,' as referring to the light complexion of a man, could have easily acquired the implication of 'cowardly' after the pattern of *Hvítakristr*. Consequently, if an Icelander already had the epithet *hvítr* or (*inn*) *hvíti* as referring to his blond complexion, this epithet could be interpreted in the derogatory sense of 'cowardly, effeminate.' In the *Flateyjarbók* precaution is taken to avoid this interpretation of the name *Helgi hvítr*. The *Lokasenna* shows indubitable signs of the decline in reverence for the heathen gods; hence Heimdall (*hvílastr ása*) could, through Loki's slanderous tongue, easily have been converted into (*sveinn*) *inn hvíti* ('that milksop'), especially since it required no courage to beguile Gefion through the means which he employed.⁵ The contemptuous sense of *hvítr* 'cowardly' was restricted to males obviously because cowardice was considered to be a female characteristic, and hence there could be no reason to emphasize it in connection with females.

After Christianity had become established as the national religion in Iceland, this heathen conception of Christian 'cowardice' disappeared but left its traces in the epithet *hvítr*, especially when one wished to belittle or vilify a personal

⁴ Cf. *Njálss.* (CII,19): "Hefir þú heyrt þat," sagði hon, "er þórr bauð Kristi á hólm, ok þorði hann eigi at berjaz við þór?"

⁵ Finnur Jónsson interprets *inn hvíti* here in a laudatory sense (*Lex. Poet.*, 302^a, s.v.): "... rosende er det: enn h-i sveinn Lok 20, h-astr ása, om Heimdal, Dry 15 ... hvor det synes at betyde 'lys, skön.'"

enemy, as in a *ntðvtsa* (cf. *Björn Arngeirsson htdælakappi*, and *Lokas.* 20); the double sense ('fair': 'cowardly') was characteristic of skaldic poetry and served to enhance the sarcastic effect.⁶ In support of my explanation of the pejorative implication of 'cowardly' in the adjective *hvitr* is the fact that only the adjective *hvitr*, not the adjectives *bjartr*, *bleikr*, *ljóss*, which likewise refer to a fair complexion, acquired this pejorative sense; Christ was always designated as *Hvíta-kristr*, never as *Bjarta-*, *Bleika-*, or *Ljósa-kristr*. A contributing factor in favor of the pejorative sense of 'cowardly' may have been the fact that 'white' denotes a rather insipid color, characteristic of weak, unhealthy persons (cf. Eng. 'white-livered' = 'having a pale, sallow appearance' > 'cowardly').

⁶ Cf. Eng. *yellow* = color: 'cowardly, timid,' in the sentence 'The Chinese are yellow.' A friend to the Chinese would interpret 'yellow' here as 'belonging to the *yellow* race'; an enemy to the Chinese would gladly interpret 'yellow' here as 'having a *yellow* streak; cowardly, timid.' ON *hvitr*, as referring to a man, offers a parallel opportunity for double interpretation, i.e., either 'fair-complexioned' or 'cowardly' (or both).

THE FORTY-SECOND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCANDINAVIAN STUDY

The Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study met in Koren Library on the campus of Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, on Friday and Saturday, May 2 and 3, 1952.

FIRST SESSION, FRIDAY, MAY 2, 1952, 2:00 P.M.

The meeting was called to order by Professor Arestad, President of the Society.

President J. W. Ylvisaker of Luther College in his address of welcome expressed his pleasure in having his college serve as host to the Society. He pointed out that Luther College ever since its founding more than ninety years ago has been a center for Scandinavian culture. A cordial invitation was extended to visit the Norwegian-American Historical Museum as well as the pioneer cabins on the campus.

The reading of papers was begun:

1. *Fröding and the Dramatic Monolog*—15 minutes. By Professor Walter Johnson, University of Washington. In Professor Johnson's absence the paper was read by Professor Arestad. Comments by Professors Richard Beck and E. Gustav Johnson.

2. *Comments on Mythical Name-Giving in Old Norse*—15 minutes. By Professor A. M. Sturtevant, University of Kansas. Discussion by Professor Beck.

3. *Kristmann Gudmundsson, Icelandic Novelist with an International Audience*—20 minutes. By Professor Richard Beck, University of North Dakota. Discussion by Professors Alexis, Arestad, and Glambek.

At this point an intermission was held, during which coffee was served in Brandt Hall. Luther College served as host.

4. *"Fögr er hlöðin" and the Attitude towards Nature in the Old Icelandic Family Sagas*—20 minutes. By Professor Paul Schach, University of Nebraska. Comments and discussion by Professors Sturtevant, Beck, Glambek, and Franzén.

5. *The Patterns of the Work of Pär Lagerkvist*—15 minutes.

By Professor Walter W. Gustafson, Upsala College. In Professor Gustafson's absence the paper was read by Professor Alexis. Comments by Professor Arestad.

The following committees were appointed: for Resolutions, Professors Franzén and E. Gustav Johnson; for Auditing, Professors Alexis, Jörgen Thompson, and Richard Beck.

Twenty-six persons attended the session.

At 6:30 the annual dinner was held in the Viking Room of the Winishiek Hotel. Professor Lloyd Hustvedt served as toastmaster. After musical numbers by Mr. John Hovey and Mrs. Roy Harrisville accompanied by Miss Katherine Ulvilden, the following greetings were presented: by Professor Richard Beck from Norman Brunsdale, Governor of North Dakota, and from John West, President of the University of North Dakota; by Professor Jörgen Thompson from Odd Hølaas, Norwegian Cultural Attaché at Washington, D.C.; by the Secretary from Dr. Bryn J. Hovde, University of Wisconsin. After brief speeches by Professors Alexis, Sturtevant, and E. Gustav Johnson came the main speaker for the evening, Professor Paul Knaplund, University of Wisconsin. His address on Rasmus B. Anderson, pioneer of Scandinavian studies in America and former student of Luther College, was highly appreciated.

SECOND SESSION, SATURDAY, MAY 3, 1952, 9:15 A.M.

The meeting was called to order by Professor Arestad, President of the Society.

The report from the Secretary-Treasurer together with a report from the Committee on Auditing was read and accepted.

The report by the Editor was read and accepted.

The committee on Resolutions offered the following report, which was accepted:

The Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study expresses its appreciation to Luther College, its president, Dr. J. W. Ylvisaker, and its local Committee on Arrangements, Lloyd Hustvedt, chairman, Professor David T. Nelson, Professor Finn Glambek, and Mrs. Inga B. Norstog, for their kind reception of the annual meeting of the Society, May 2 and 3,

1952. The Society expresses its thanks to those who provided the fine program at the annual dinner on Friday evening: Mr. John Hovey, instrumental soloist, Mrs. Roy Harrisville, vocal soloist, and Miss Katherine Ulvilden, pianist, and especially Dr. Paul Knaplund, for his interesting and informative lecture on Rasmus B. Anderson.

On the motion of Professor E. Gustav Johnson the Society authorized the Secretary to include in the minutes of the meeting the greeting from the governor of North Dakota, which reads as follows: "Please convey to the faculty and others in attendance at the convention my sincere wishes for a successful convention in every way."

After the Secretary-Treasurer had called attention to the need for additional revenue, Professor Jörgen Thompson moved that paragraph 9 of the Society's constitution be amended so as to raise the stipulated annual dues for Associate Members from \$2.00 to \$3.00. The motion was passed.

The Secretary-Treasurer then announced the result of the balloting for officers, as follows:

President, Professor Adolph B. Benson, Yale University

Vice-President, Professor Kenneth Bjork, St. Olaf College

Members of the Advisory Committee: Professor Arne Lindberg, State College of Washington; and Professor Assar Janzén, University of California, Berkeley, California

Since Professor Benson was elected President and thereby automatically removed from the Advisory Committee, Dr. Hedin Bronner, U. S. Embassy, Copenhagen, Denmark, was (after the adjournment of the Society) elected to serve on the Advisory Committee in place of Professor Benson.

The President then reported that the Secretary-Treasurer, Professor Martin Soderback, North Park College, and the Managing Editor, Professor A. M. Sturtevant, University of Kansas, had both been re-elected.

The reading of papers was then resumed:

6. *Two Etymologies*—15 minutes. By Professor Gösta Franzén, University of Chicago. Comments by Professors Sturtevant and Glambeek.

7. *English Loan Words in Modern Swedish*—15 minutes. By

Professor Joseph Alexis, University of Nebraska. Paper discussed by Professors Sturtevant, Franzén, Arestad, and E. Gustav Johnson.

8. *Ibsen's "Peer Gynt" and Hamsun's "Munken Vendt"*—15 minutes. By Professor Sverre Arestad, University of Washington. Comments by Professor Richard Beck.

At this point Professor Arestad had to leave the meeting in order to make train connections. Vice-President Professor Franzén then served as chairman for the remainder of the meeting.

9. *Main Trends in the Twentieth-Century Norwegian Novel*—20 minutes. By Dr. Rolf E. Nettum, University of Chicago. Comments by Professors Beck and Franzén.

Professor Franzén declared the meeting adjourned at 11:15 A.M.

Twenty-one persons attended this session.

TREASURER'S REPORT

FROM MAY 1, 1951 TO APRIL 30, 1952

Income

On hand May 1, 1951.....	\$3,422.42	
Membership dues.....	1,587.00	
Donations.....	529.00	
Interest on savings account.....	30.46	
From Elizabeth Marshall Estate.....	27.60	
Sale of <i>Scandinavian Studies</i>	132.97	
Advertising in <i>Scandinavian Studies</i>	266.00	
Income from investments.....	347.50	\$ 6,342.95

Disbursements

North Park College Book Store, supplies.....	\$	3.11	
Gösta Franzén, expenses for survey of Scandinavian courses in U.S.A.....		11.51	
Postmaster			
1000 stamped envelopes.....	\$	34.00	
1000 stamped and printed envelopes....	34.44	68.44	
Walter Johnson, postage.....		10.00	
Banta Publishing Company			
<i>Scandinavian Studies</i> , May, 1951, issue.	\$554.38		
<i>Scandinavian Studies</i> , August, 1951, issue.....	539.15		
<i>Scandinavian Studies</i> , November 1951 issue.....	483.67		
<i>Scandinavian Studies</i> , February, 1952 issue.....	418.57		
Freight charges for moving stock of <i>Studies Menasha</i> —Chicago.....	18.16	\$2,013.93	
Roosen & Reynolds, printing circulars, letter heads, envelopes, programs.....		76.75	
Hutton & Co., 30 shares Chicago, Rock Island, & Pacific RR, Series A, Cv. Pref.....		2,604.95	
Clerical help.....		92.00	\$ 4,880.69
On hand April 30, 1952.....			1,462.26
Endowment Fund (Market value as of April 30, 1952).....			9,670.00
TOTAL ASSETS.....			\$11,132.26

MARTIN SODERBACK, *Secretary-Treasurer*

REVIEWS

Thorell, Olof. *Fem Moseböcker på fornsvenska. En språklig undersökning på grundval av de bevarade handskrifterna. (Nordiska texter och undersökningar utgivna i Uppsala av Bengt Hesselman. 18).* Hugo Gebers Förlag, Stockholm. Levin & Munksgaard, Copenhagen. 1951. Pp. VIII+236. Price, 10 crowns.

The Pentateuch was translated into Old Swedish in the 1330's. The original of this paraphrased translation is not preserved, but there exist two copies, both of them most likely written in the joint monastery and convent of Vadstena.¹ One of these manuscripts is now in the Royal Library of Copenhagen, the other in the Royal Library of Stockholm. The former was written down in the first half of the fifteenth century, the latter about a century later.

For certain reasons it is quite clear that neither of these two manuscripts was copied directly from the original translation. They are transcripts, independently made, from the same older manuscript, which seems to have been close to the prototype. By a thorough and detailed comparison of the two manuscripts it is possible to re-establish the language of their archetype and, accordingly, of the first translation. Such an investigation has already been made in an excellent study by the well-known Swedish philologist, Bengt Hesselman.²

In his doctoral dissertation here reviewed, Thorell starts from Hesselman's results and suggestions and, by an examination of the phonology and the vocabulary of the two existing manuscripts, makes an attempt to establish the provenance of the original. A necessary prerequisite is the clarification of the relationship between the two preserved sources. Therefore the first part of the book is devoted to an investigation of some distinctive dialectal characteristics in the sound structure and

¹ This institution of Vadstena was both a monastery and a nunnery, a characteristic feature of the order instituted by Birgitta.

² *Språkformen i MB I eller Fem Moseböcker på svenska*, tolkade och utlagde vid medlet av 1300-talet. Uppsala 1927. (= *Skrifter utgivna av Kungl. Humanist. Vetensk.-Samf. i Uppsala* 2:17.)

vocabulary of these manuscripts. In this investigation the author gives a meticulous description of the geographical distribution of the phonetic and vocabulary phenomena in Modern Swedish dialects pertinent to the distinction. This examination gives evidence for the provincial origins of the two copyists. The one who copied the oldest manuscript reveals himself as a native of Västmanland, or at least of the region around Lake Mälär, while the scribe of the younger manuscript, a nun, was apparently from Småland.

The principal part of the book consists of a description of distinctive and geographically limited phenomena in the phonology, morphology, and vocabulary of the archetype. Here the author constantly encounters the difficult and delicate problem as to whether the distinctive mark in question is characteristic of the language of the copyist or the scribe of the original. He handles these problems with sound judgment, and it is of rare occurrence that the reader finds reason for objection. The description of the original is achieved by a detailed comparison of the two copies and also between these copies and other Old Swedish sources as well as modern dialects.

The investigation of the phonology and morphology gives evidence of several obvious conformities between the language of the original paraphrase, on the one hand, and on the other, that of other Old Swedish sources from Västergötland, particularly the Younger Law of the Westgoths as well as modern dialects of this province.

The vocabulary contains some words which today are found more or less exclusively in the dialects of Götaland. Other words have a more distinctly southwestern distribution, and these exclude the eastern parts of Götaland as a possible place of origin. A few words occur today only in southern dialects, including those of the southernmost part of Västergötland. Finally, we find a couple of words, of extraordinary significance for the author's purpose, which are limited only to the dialects around the present city of Gothenburg. Through such gradual eliminations of one region after the other, a beautiful piece of detective work, the author arrives at the certainly correct conclusion that the original Old Swedish paraphrase of the

Pentateuch was made by a man whose home was in the southwestern part of Västergötland.

The author shows a sound knowledge of the modern dialects. It must have cost him years of assiduous work to collect and map out, parish after parish, all the phenomena involved in his argumentation. His method is not new, but earlier investigations of similar type have often yielded incorrect or uncertain results because of insufficient knowledge of modern dialects.

Since no space is here available for concrete critical remarks, it may only be said, in conclusion, that Thorell's book is most valuable, methodically instructive, and sometimes thrillingly interesting, a good representative of the amazingly high standard of Swedish doctoral dissertations of today. Its value and fitness for use would have been considerably enhanced by an index.

ASSAR JANZÉN

University of California, Berkeley

Tiberg, Nils. *Estlandssvenskarnas folkliga kultur. I. Stånds-sämhället. (Skrifter utgivna av Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademi. 25).* A.-B Lundequistska bokhandeln, Uppsala. Ejnar Munksgaard, Copenhagen. Uppsala, 1951. Pp. 328. Price, 15 crowns.

With the death of Charles XII in 1718 the century-old dream of a Swedish empire came to an end. The Baltic provinces—Ingermanland, Lithuania, and Estonia—were ceded to Russia, and the inhabitants of the Swedish colonies in the coastal areas of the latter province became subjects of the Russian czar. The change of sovereignty naturally affected their position since the new rulers were of different nationality, but it did not prevent them from preserving their own language or adhering to their own culture. They remained Swedes throughout the centuries, and it was not until World War II made conditions unendurable that they gave up their farms and fishing-grounds and returned to the old homeland on the western side of the Baltic.

The unique Swedish settlements in Estonia have, of course, attracted the attention of scholars, and a good deal has been

written about them since Carl Russwurm published, about one hundred years ago, his extensive work, *Eibofolke oder die Schweden an den Küsten Ehslands und auf Runö* (Reval, 1855). Many fields, however, still remain unexplored. It is, therefore, gratifying that a series, *Estlandssvenskarnas folkliga kultur*, has now been initiated by the eminent authority in the field, Dr. Nils Tiberg, who for many years has been the leader of "Estlandssvenska undersökningen" connected with the Dialect and Folklore Archives at Uppsala university. Dr. Tiberg is also the editor of the first volume in the series.

In this book a clear and detailed picture is given of the position of the Swedish-minority group within the old class-society which in Estonia was preserved until the beginning of World War I. The great landowners—for the most part German nobility—constituted the dominating class, whereas the Swedes, who were farmers, fishermen, and servants, belonged to a more humble social group. It is those people who in the book tell us—often in their own words—about social conditions in Estonia during the decades before and after the turn of the century. As one might expect, their opinions are often unfavorable, but the editor has made commendable efforts to present both *pro's* and *con's*.

These views are indeed interesting, but what makes the book so extremely valuable is the wealth of facts and information about a unique culture that has now been completely swept away. Scholars in various fields—linguists, folklorists, ethnologists, and social scientists—will all benefit from the abundance of material it offers. Alphabetical and systematic indexes and notes provide excellent keys to the content.

To this reviewer the book is of special interest and value since he is working on a treatise on Swedish place names on the island of Runö in Estonia, but the value of the book entitles it to a place in all Scandinavian libraries in this country. Forthcoming volumes in the series will be devoted to special research projects, such as the dialects in the various areas, and to publication of documents and records.

GÖSTA FRANZEN
University of Chicago

The World Through Literature. Edited by Charlton Laird. Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, for the National Council of Teachers of English. 1951. Pp. xx+506. Price, \$3.75.

As the editor says, the late Professor Arthur E. Christy conceived this symposium "in the hope that, if thoughtful essays dealing with the great literatures were laid side by side, the implied comparison might reveal a good bit about the way men write, and incidentally about the way men live and what they are. With that in view specialists in thirteen great literatures were asked to write the most penetrating statements they could about the fields of their special study." The idea was excellent, but, as Professor Christy feared, the results are uneven.

The essays are Paul Radin's "Primitive Literature," Shao Chang Lee's "Chinese Literature," Younghill Kang and John Morrison's "Japanese Literature," Philo Buck's "Indian Literature," Edwin E. Calverley's "The Koran," Edward J. Jurji's "Arabic Literature," Eisig Silberschlag's "Hebrew Literature: An Evaluation," Allen R. Benham's "Greek and Latin: The Philosophic Tradition in Literature," Guiseppe Prezzolini's "Italian Literature," H. R. Huse's "French Literature," Rudolph Schevill's "Spanish and Portuguese Literature," Bayard Quincy Morgan's "German Literature," Adolph B. Benson's "Scandinavian Literature," J. A. Posin's "Slavic Literature," and Madaline W. Nichol's "Latin American Literature."

All of the essays are worth reading even though some of the writers yield to the temptation to make their contributions little more than inadequate surveys of less than forty pages each. Professor Huse, who yielded more than anyone else to this temptation, says, for example:

The preceding account of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is like a conducted tour, in half an hour, of a great museum of art. The guide can only indicate with a gesture the size of the halls and hurriedly affirm the richness of the contents (p. 294).

Professor Benham has wisely limited his essay to a discussion

of five problems broached by the Greeks and discussed by both the Greeks and the Romans; by means of his careful organization and clear exposition of the problems he does more to explain the Greek and Roman contribution than some of the others succeed in doing in their conventional surveys. Professor Morgan's essay would, I believe, have delighted Professor Christy, for it is a thoughtful essay which presents an interpretation of the German character as revealed in German literature. It should prove a basis of departure for more or less heated discussion by many of those who are interested in the Germans and their way of life.

In the essay of greatest interest to readers of this journal, Professor Benson presents: (1) an interpretation of the Scandinavian character as revealed in its literature, (2) a survey of the literature, and (3) a very brief consideration—scattered throughout the essay—of the literary works and writers who have played important parts in world literature. The limitation of space has made both the survey and the consideration of the role of Scandinavian in world literature inadequate, but in his introductory discussion of the characteristics of Scandinavian literature, Professor Benson makes a contribution which deserves fuller treatment than he could give to the subject in a few pages. That he is the scholar who could do this, anyone who has read his essay, "The Swedish American Heritage" (*American Scandinavian Studies*, 1952, pp. 369-374, and *American Swedish Monthly*, June 1948) and who knows what he has produced will agree, I believe. Space has forced him to limit his characterization to brief considerations of such matters as the Scandinavian love of freedom (personal and political); the seriousness of the Scandinavians and their writers because of an environment that demanded of them "unusual vigor, exertion, organization, and deeds of heroism"; the Scandinavians' religious tolerance; love of nature; humor; preference for the practical and concrete rather than abstract speculation; and the tendency to relate science, history, law, and literature. Take one example: "Philosophically, the Scandinavians, ever observant and thoughtful, first became Stoics and fatalists, but always remained fundamentally realists, with idealistic trends" (pp.

372-373). More fully developed, such excellent statements would go far to make clear to non-Scandinavians why the editor of this symposium has no need to fear that "readers may ask why a chapter is devoted to the Scandinavian Peninsula [sic] and none [sic] to the Balkan Peninsula" (p. xi).

WALTER JOHNSON

University of Washington

Lagerkvist, Pär. *Barabbas*. Translated by Alan Blair. With a preface by Lucien Maury and a letter by André Gide. Random House, New York, 1951. Pp. 180. Price, \$2.75.

Pär Lagerkvist, voted the Nobel Prize for literature in 1951 for his novel *Barabbas*, becomes first widely known to the English-speaking world at the climax of his literary powers in a work which bears the core of his constantly maturing philosophy. Whatever direction Lagerkvist's writing has taken, and he has passed through many experimental stages in his portrayals within poetry, drama, and the novel, whatever inequalities may lie within his forms of expression, his powers are distinguished by the one constant which underlies his work as a whole: an attempt to discover reality beneath the semblance in an uncompromising search for truth.

In *Barabbas*, this quest becomes identified with the biblical version of the Crucifixion, God's plan of redemption through His manifestation of love to mankind. In a brooding preoccupation with the ultimate in human destiny, Lagerkvist tells the simple, realistic story of Barabbas, an evil doer, who escapes the death penalty and becomes witness to the voluntary act of sacrifice on the part of One who died in his stead. After watching Christ's crucifixion, the reprieved criminal is impelled by an inner necessity to become reconciled to the Law of Love. Though he cannot understand the doctrine, he tries, throughout his life, to resolve the conflict between selfhood and brotherhood. With telling artistry, the author projects the conflict far beyond the limits of his narrative. In the final scene of the book, Barabbas, about to die on the cross, speaks *into the darkness* the very words of the One who had died in his stead: "To Thee I deliver up my soul." Beyond this simple statement lies

the sequence of history, symbolized by Barabbas, within whom the powers of light and darkness have spent their conflicting force.

The leading incidents of the book serve to point up Lagerkvist's study of the man and his conflict, a conflict which underlies every man's dual capacity for good or evil. Barabbas was born of a Moabite woman, an outcast, who had died in childbirth cursing her burden. In his youth he became the leader of an outlaw band when he killed Eliahu, a fellow criminal, in a fight among the hills over the Jordan. Unknown to anyone, even to Barabbas, Eliahu was his father, and in the death struggle between the two men Barabbas received a knife wound, which scar, as the stamp of Cain, he bore to the day of his death. "Barabbas was conceived and born in hatred of all things created in heaven and earth."

Lagerkvist's Barabbas, however, is more than a simple creature of hate. A criminal of passion and power, he finds no meaningful center outside himself until that day when he stands at the foot of the Cross at Golgotha to witness the crucifixion of One who has chosen to die in his place. Not oblivious to a law of justice he cannot meet the reproachful eyes of the mother of Christ. "He went forward and remained for a time, but he could not pray. He was an evil doer and his prayers could not be received, since he had not atoned for his crimes."

When Barabbas returns to the city, he is unable to forget the figure of the crucified One. He talks with the potters, the oil-pressers, the tanners, the weavers, those among whom the new faith flourished; and he questions them. From Peter he learns that the One crucified was the Son of God, that the single command of his doctrine had been: "Love ye one another." But the questions of Barabbas are those of a faithless man, and he is shunned as an unbeliever.

On the morning of the third day after the crucifixion, Barabbas is drawn to the sepulchre to witness the promised resurrection. Will the crucified One rise from the dead? This he wants to see with his own eyes. When he comes to the place, the stone has been removed. Certainly there has been, then, no resurrection! The disciples have rolled the stone aside and made

off with the dead! A Messiah permitting himself to be crucified. Impossible! Yet one of his disciples had said: "He has power to command the living to follow, and the dead to rise." And there had been darkness on Golgotha when He delivered up His soul!

At the tomb he sees kneeling the hare-lipped girl whom he had once ill-used and brought with child; and she tells him of the miracle of resurrection and the angel in a mantle of fire. He hears her story in silence, unable to speak to destroy her faith. To him there had come no vision: he had known only the reality of darkness when Christ died.

Barabbas remains in Jerusalem, a man without motive or capacity for action. He belongs nowhere. He finds it impossible to identify himself with the powers of either good or evil. Persecution of the Christians has begun, and accusation is brought against the hare-lipped girl. She is condemned to death. Barabbas comes to watch the stoning. It is more than he can bear. Surreptitiously he edges through the crowd, knifes the Pharisee who has directed the first missile, and disappears. No one notices. In the night he returns to bear away the broken body of the girl along the desert trail to her home, and buries her beside their child. As he sits beside the grave, staring into the darkness, he wonders at his deed. It could make no difference to her now where she rested. Yet it seemed somehow right. Anyway . . . he had killed the man who first struck her!

In the second movement of the story, Barabbas, now a man in the fifties, is a slave to the Roman State in the Cyprian Copper Mines. There he is shackled to Sahak, a man of simple piety and a fervent believer in the new faith. On the back of his slave's disk, Sahak has inscribed the name of Christos Jesus: and Barabbas, moved by the devotion of his comrade, asks him to inscribe the sign on his own disk. In the darkness of the mine, Barabbas relates to his comrade all that he has witnessed at Golgotha. They pray together.

One day they are observed at their devotions and whipped. It is the first time Barabbas is made to suffer in the name of the crucified One. Forthwith he is unaccountably changed and becomes a stranger to Sahak. He no longer prays although he

serves as a careful watchman for his friend's devotions. In time, however, they are brought before a procurator of Rome to answer charges of disloyalty to the State. The inscription on their disks verifies the accusation, and they are brought to judgment, commanded by the procurator to choose between God and Caesar. Sahak remains steadfast in his faith:

"Why do you bear this name on your disk?"

"It is the name of my God. I belong to him," answers Sahak.

"Do you not understand that in this you set yourself against Caesar? The penalty is death."

"But I cannot deny my God."

Sahak is condemned to crucifixion. To Barabbas is put the question:

"Do you too believe in this God?"

"I have no God."

"Why then do you bear this Christos Iesus carved on your disk? Is that not the meaning of the inscription?"

"Because I have *wanted* to believe."

Barabbas is freed; but as he passes from the presence of his judge, the Roman sees in his eyes an inexplicable expression: "Hatred quivered there like the point of an arrow that would never be shot."

Not long thereafter Barabbas is taken to Rome by his master. Though he has little to do with his fellow slaves, and ever hates the world about him, he cannot stop questioning about the teachings of the Christians. One night, having set out to attend a secret meeting in the catacombs, he is met by the flare of torches, and many fires illuminate the city. He hears the cry: "The Christians are burning the city." In the sudden belief that the awaited hour has come when the crucified man will return to destroy the world and save mankind as He promised, he catches up a firebrand and rushes forward. This time he will not fail, he, the reprobate brother, will not fail to do his part in setting 'this whole odious world afire.' And so the spark within him bursts into flame, and error takes the name of action.

Barabbas is taken prisoner and with other Christians condemned to crucifixion. In prison he learns the truth: it was Caesar who had ordered the burning of Rome in order to place

the blame on the Christians. "You have helped a worldly ruler," said a fellow prisoner. . . . "You do not understand that our God is Love."

On the cross of crucifixion the dusk fell. Only Barabbas at the last was left hanging there alone, still alive. "When he felt death approaching, that which he had always feared, he spoke into the darkness as if he were speaking to it: "To thee I deliver up my soul." And then he gave up the ghost.

The last words of Barabbas, for many readers, are equivocal. Are these words the prayer of a regenerate man? or a casting into the darkness 'which is the same in all directions'? Although it may not be necessary to answer the question, Lagerkvist has unfolded the spiritual drama of a man who begins and ends a questioner. He never understands the command of the Christian brotherhood, "Love ye one another"; but the spark is within him and he touches it closely. He never lets go the quest for truth and his denials bear the stamp of rudimentary intellectual honesty no less than moral cowardice and blindness. Here, as in the resolution of Goethe's Faust, we meet the implication that God's redemption does not account man's perfection, but his direction, and we await the answer from out the darkness.

This is not to suggest that the author has set out to establish proof of a faith or theory. To those for whom neutrality in the handling of a story is the mark of a great mind Lagerkvist offers strong challenge. The greatness of the book *Barabbas* rests in part on the simplicity with which he portrays the different events of Barabbas' life as well as the meanings underlying them. Every movement of the story speaks to the point. Few contemporary novels better illustrate what the French call "l'art de ne pas tout dire." And most rewarding is the book to those who discover under a contemporary writing a very ancient and infinitely precious text: "The light shineth in the darkness, albeit the darkness comprehendeth it not."

The admirable translation by Alan Blair brings to the English reader a book, in spirit and in letter, very close to the original.

ESTHER H. RAPP
University of Illinois

Mjöberg, Jöran. *Livsproblemet hos Lagerkvist*. Bonniers, Stockholm, 1951. Pp. 200. Price, \$3.50 (paper bound).

When Pär Lagerkvist was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature for 1951, the citation indicated that he had won the award "for the artistic power and deep originality with which in his literary work he seeks the answers to the eternal questions of mankind." This brief statement, composed apparently by the Secretary of the Swedish Academy, is a succinct and well considered summary of the contributions of Pär Lagerkvist.

The new book by Jöran Mjöberg, at present serving as lecturer in Swedish at Harvard University, is a timely study and analysis of what the citation calls Pär Lagerkvist's "seeking the answers to the eternal questions of mankind." The Introduction and first three chapters clearly present Pär Lagerkvist's attempts, in various works, to seek the meaning of life either in an undaunted facing of stark realities or in faith in an unseen world of ideals. Constantly, in his art, he makes use of motifs such as darkness and light, body and soul, death and life, suffering and purification, resurrection and final victory. Mjöberg shows clearly how Pär Lagerkvist applies these motifs in his compositions. As is pointed out in the discussion, he often shifts from one opposite view to another until in some cases he arrives at a kind of fusion or balancing of extremes—the opposing principles are shown to belong together, to be necessary to each other as parts of the same whole. Thus in some moods Pär Lagerkvist faces a scientific disillusionment, or darkness, or the physical aspects of life, or death; in other moods he turns his attention to noble ideals such as contentment, social service, love, or to the radiant light of this world, the spiritual, purification, resurrection, and victory. Though he never quite makes up his mind, there is a definite trend toward faith and spiritual progress—life, as set forth in Pär Lagerkvist's art, is a fugue of opposites woven together in a great, wonderful pattern.

The fourth chapter of Mjöberg's book is an interesting and original account of Pär Lagerkvist's use of elements from folk ritual and primitive religion, or from Plato, Euripides, Hindu and Oriental literature—a most valuable and provocative study. Nothing is said, however, about the influence of modern French

painting, which is certainly an early and fundamental influence on his work.

The final section of the work is a critical and artistic analysis of some of the main plays (which Mjöberg considers as most important in revealing his philosophy) and of the last three novels, *The Dwarf*, *The Hangman*, and *Barabbas*. There is a rather detailed discussion of such matters as sources, main motifs, characters, and literary influences—all very clearly and gracefully presented. The book as a whole is most valuable to the Pär Lagerkvist student and reader—particularly as regards Lagerkvist's philosophy of life.

Earlier books on Pär Lagerkvist's career are still of considerable value. Erik Hörnström, in his book *Pär Lagerkvist from the Red Time to The Eternal Smile*, studies only the earliest works but gives a very useful summary of Pär Lagerkvist's literary code (which Mjöberg has not sufficiently considered) and offers some very keen interpretations of the early poetry and the early plays. Ragnhild Fearnley in her book, *Pär Lagerkvist*, written in Norwegian, discusses very fully his whole development, supplies a good deal of interesting factual information, has many useful summaries and criticisms, but she tends to be too eulogistic.

A definitive study of Pär Lagerkvist's whole writing-career is probably not possible as yet—much ground work has to be done and there is need of considerable synthesis and clearing of opinions. It must also be admitted that Pär Lagerkvist is not an easy writer to interpret, reflecting, as he does, the confusion and uncertainty of modern life with many of its frustrations. There is a real danger of overstressing his philosophy, over-analyzing the motifs metaphysically—thus overloading and obscuring his art, which he certainly intended to be simple.

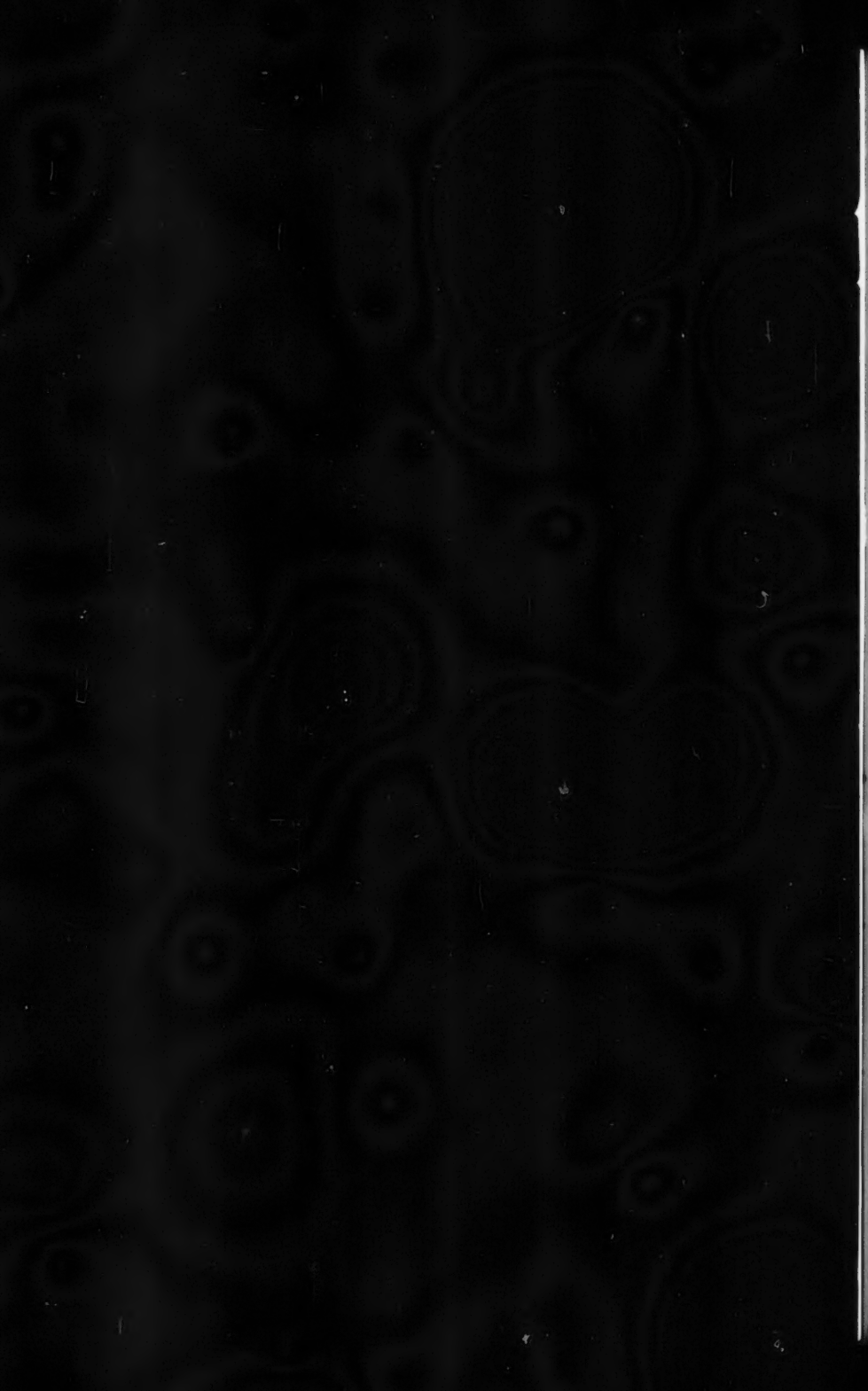
In my opinion one must first consider artistic values in the study of Pär Lagerkvist. The first and possibly most fundamental influence on his work came from his study of French painters during his sojourn in Paris; these new patterns of his artistic code are set forth fully and explicitly in the important early treatise, "The Art of Words in Relation to Sculpture and Painting" (1913). The first part of the Nobel Prize citation

which describes his contribution as "artistic power and deep originality" is, I feel, very pertinent.

Per Lindberg, famous director and actor, friend and associate of Pär Lagerkvist, made a fine beginning to this artistic analysis in his article, "Some Viewpoints on the Dramas of Pär Lagerkvist." He interpreted many of the plays as cultic rites, instituted for the purpose of summoning good powers and exorcising evil powers—or as intense dramatic struggles between powers of good and evil. In my opinion this artistic approach is more likely to be fruitful than a metaphysical analysis, and the speculative philosophical elements can easily be fitted into the artistic frame.

The following quotation from the above-mentioned article by Per Lindberg could indicate the direction that an artistic interpretation of Pär Lagerkvist's works might take: "No, what he had to say required a form which expressed the spirit, the forms, the tones, the chords, the accumulated longing of volumes. It was a form closely related to the principles of modern painting. The author was to a great extent a painter. His imagination expressed itself in pictures."

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